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Building empathy through literacy: A review of classroom literacy practices

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Abstract

The discussion of the reciprocal relationship between empathy and literacy practices is arguably non-existent. This review discusses classroom literacy practices and the empathy flow in each practice. These classroom literacy practices were chosen because of their value in modeling empathy in the classroom while at the same time producing essential literacy skills in students. A reflective framework guides the de-construction of these lesson plans and can be applied to any classroom literacy practice. This reflective framework unveiled empathetic practices in literacy teaching.

Building Empathy through Literacy:
A Review of Classroom Literacy Practices

A Graduate Project
Submitted to the
Division of Literacy Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
in Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Literacy Education
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
Alyssa J. Bruecken
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This project by Alyssa J. Bruecken
Titled: "Building Empathy Through Literacy: A Review of Classroom Literacy
Practices"

Has been approved as meeting the research requirements the Masters of Arts in
Literacy Education.

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Abstract

The discussion of the reciprocal relationship between empathy and literacy practices is arguably non-existent. This review discusses classroom literacy practices and the empathy flow in each practice. These classroom literacy practices were chosen because of their value in modeling empathy in the classroom while at the same time producing essential literacy skills in students. A reflective framework guides the de-construction of these lesson plans and can be applied to any classroom literacy practice. This reflective framework unveiled empathetic practices in literacy teaching.

Introduction

How can educators address the "empathy deficit," as coined by President Obama, in our country (Pesca, 2007)? Can our curriculum use literacy as a natural springboard for exploration into self-reflection and as a deeper awareness of the world? As the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (as cited in Nicolini, 2008) states, civility is "much more than being polite. Open discussion of competing truths should not have to polarize communities; it should make them stronger" (para. 4). The work of educating young citizens to enhance future discussions and communication with each other requires empathy.

Preparing our students to engage in today's world, as literate beings, requires empathetic and reflective practice that can be taught explicitly in our classrooms. "In teaching young people to think critically, we should help them to differentiate between listening to understand and feel with the other and listening only for our purposes" (Noddings, 2012, p. 55). How can empathy be modeled and practiced with integrity in the classroom?

Beginning The Conversation

I set up my 5th grade reading classroom, in a small K-12 rural school, believing that discussion and reading strategy practice would guide my classroom instruction and expand my students' worldview. I was not prepared for the student individuality; I would need to navigate in order to be an effective reading teacher.

One of our first days of class we were discussing why we read. One student shared, "We read because our teacher tells us to." This answer was one reason our

class began a collaborative discovery of the power of literacy and its relation to the power of their voice. My lesson plans become more responsive to my students' needs. I modeled how to question, summarize, support one's opinions and any other strategy a student may need to better bring their awareness to the texts and to the class. I modeled what students needed in order to more fully react to texts and led mini-lessons on how to speak with the class about their reactions to the text including discussing others' opinions of the text. My carefully laid out lesson plans with strategies designated for each week collected dust as I observed my students. I analyzed my observations and student questions to decide where to guide their literacy lives with the information they were giving me about their growth in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Students began to express their thoughts and asked questions like, "I wonder what the first word was?" and "Why can't I say "monocorn" instead of "unicorn?" We deepened our study of various aspects of reading using the Daily 5 model strategies (Boushey & Moser, 2009) and reflecting on Bloom's Taxonomy (Athanassiou, McNett, & Harvey, 2003) in our learning activities as a way of giving words to the deep thinking and strategy building that students were engaging in to share their own voice. Students volunteered their recognition of the depth of knowledge reached by certain activities. "Miss B, I think that we analyzed in this activity!" exclaimed one student as we were discussing our reactions to a poem. These rural students debated about farming laws, considered the relevance of current news stories, practiced metacognition, connected to text, and developed

their conversation skills. Literacy involves so much more than decoding and

prediction procedures that were the mainstays of many of my early lessons. Instead

of teacher question and answer time about reading skills, class discussions on

fluency lead to quandaries about the origin of language. This inquiry then led to the

realization that language was theirs to shape and manipulate to express their

understanding of the world as well as connect to others. The 5th graders needed

guidance in reflecting and deepening their understanding of their conversations and

interactions with the variety of their literacy world and its ever-changing

multimodal capacities. From a small town of three hundred in southwest Iowa,

these students exchanged their ideas with other students in Florida and across the

world. Conversation with students in other locations was difficult at first, but we

took time to analyze what a conversation is and process any productive tension the

students may be feeling about new information. Engaging in reading while

navigating the input of information they were experiencing through various

technologies, my students began to find that their voice affected the community and

world around them. This created a much different classroom environment than I

pictured at the beginning of teaching. This environment asked for a depth and

variety I often did not feel prepared to guide. It called for much less of my voice and

much more of the students' exploring their own individual voice. As students began

to have constructive conversations, I wondered, how could I teach my students to

communicate clearly and engage deeply in their reading? How could I help them

navigate the complex communication occurring in their world?

As I focused on my students' authentic literacy development, it became apparent that our work was to reflexively move toward empathy development. The students and I moved toward a reading class that modeled questioning and deep reflection. Reading class became so much more than decoding and predicting – it became a way to empathize and interact with the world, recognizing their voice was essential to their own literacy development. The students were deeply involved in the *practice of conversation* with their texts and each other. Conversational practice for productive social interaction was embedded in the practice of literacy.

Literacy practices develop learners. Engaging with understanding others, texts, and teachers with purpose is a natural foundation for developing as a learner. "Deep understanding of one's own identity depends upon extended engagements with others within social contacts that include physical proximity and opportunities for dialogue" (Sumara, Luce-Kapler & Iftody, 2008, p. 239). "Children have to actively construct their own interpretations about people's feelings and the way we talk or arrange our talk can invite or facilitate these constructions" (Johnston, 2012, p. 71). As the world becomes more and more complex because of the influx of conversation, it will be increasingly necessary for educators to recognize the complexity of the social skills required to navigate it (Sumara et al, 2008).

As my opening reflections on my previous teaching experience suggests, the link between empathy and literacy is present and essential. This review of literature will highlight a range of literacy practices as well as some gaps in the current literature. In the following sections I will provide questions that will frame

the paper, key terms, practical applications synthesized from the literature, and a call for new directions.

Questions

1) What is empathy?

How might educators create classroom environments that allow our students an open ground to grow and practice bringing what they know to what they are experiencing? What is empathy and why is it relevant in the classroom? What does empathy have to do with literacy?

2) Exploring Theory of Mind

How are teacher and students using awareness of their own understanding to enhance the community of learners? Why does literacy enhance empathy?

3) What does empathy flow look like in the classroom?

How do we see the flow of empathy enhancing literacy practices?

4) Next steps

How can the educational community unfold the complex layers of empathy development?

Methodology

My search for relevant empathy articles is a journey that I am still navigating as I uncover new words that others have developed in the discourse of education to mean something very similar to empathy. I began my search on the ERIC database looking for peer reviewed articles about "empathy" and "literacy". This search brought up articles mainly referring to high school settings or those in the medical

field. I narrowed my search to "elementary" and found nothing. So I began to read the articles in the upper grade levels that were specifically related to the development of empathy through literacy practices. This review opened my eyes to other lexicons for the term empathy, such as: mindfulness, mind-reading, consciousness, Theory of Mind, and social awareness. Peter Johnston's book, *Opening Minds* (2012), also had a definition close to empathy called social imagination. Recognizing the synonyms for empathy expanded my search while also bringing to light the question *How can we have productive discussions about abating the empathy deficit if we have so many different terms similar to the important idea of "engaging in another perspective"?* My search broadened; I then narrowed my search by selecting articles from a variety of grade levels and places across the country.

Essential Terms/ Key Definitions

The literature includes terms used interchangeably but with different possible interpretations. For consistency, I have defined below several key terms used throughout the paper.

1) *Difficult students* are defined here as the subjects of teacher workroom talk and venting sessions. From my experience, these student behaviors often seem to be directed at making a teacher's job more difficult. They are the behaviors educators may take personally. These are the students who are the subjects of the phrases "he seems to be out in left field," "She won't listen to a word I say," "Why can't she work with others," "If he was out of my room, life would be so much

easier." Meeting difficult students is essential to the productivity of the classroom culture.

2) *Theory of mind* is a psychology term that encompasses the "realization that others have interpretations of the world that may be similar to or different from our own" (Sumara et al., 2008, p. 229). No matter what the age or background of the individual this idea holds no one is an *empty vessel* but rather humans have a variety of unique experiences that they relate back to in order to scaffold new ideas- to learn. Although similar to the word *perspective*, this term, will be used to bring awareness to recognizing the subjective experience of every individual.

3) Reader Response is similar to, but more specific than the broad cover of Theory of Mind (Rosenblatt, 1994). Reader Response refers to the individual experience of a book based on the unique that author-student communication. What students bring to our reading is how they perceive the symbols and the message (Rosenblatt, 1994).

4) *Empathy* is the ability to engage with a different perspective. The effect or process of building empathy "deepens understandings of complex beliefs and emotional tensions that explain events" (Cunningham, 2007, p. 688) and affects students' "social relationships, their self-regulation and their moral development" (Johnston, Ivey & Faulkner, 2011, p. 233). Tying down what the definition of empathy means to the educational community begins with the work of understanding exactly what it means.

What is Empathy?

As technology creates pathways for communication, the passing of information and perspectives, the growing need for the ability to "cut through the hot air of polemics" (Gregg, 2003, p. 286) and develop life long learners, becomes a responsibility the community, especially teachers, must tackle with sincerity.

Part of the delay in the discussion of empathy is due to the explanatory gap. The common phrase to *walk in another's shoes* is often used to describe empathy. The psychology and neuroscience fields recognize empathy as a subject that "allows the self to identify with the other and individuals to connect with groups" (Jeffers, 2009, p. 2) . Jeffers also explains the German background of empathy first coined in 1850 as *einfulhung* which means "within feeling." Gregg describes using empathy as a "means by which otherwise alienated individuals might be able to converse, communicate, understand, connect" (Gregg, 2003, p. 286). In *Opening Minds* (Johnston, 2012), Johnston discusses classroom language. He uses the term social imagination, which is divided into two dimensions (Johnston, 2012). This term addresses mind reading, which includes reading the face for ideas about what another is thinking, and social reasoning (occurring around age 4) which is the idea that another can have a different point of view from their own. Nel Noddings (2012) does not use the word empathy but the idea of the "cared-for" (p. 53) is prevalent in her work. Cunningham recognizes that the teachers in her study "did not speak of empathy solely as something arrived at or displayed but also in terms of mental activities" (Cunningham, 2007, p. 685). She divides empathetic activities into four

categories: "1) think, reason, puzzle out; 2) experience, feel, sense, recreate, get into; 3) understand, grasp, see, know; 4) imagine" (Cunningham, 2007, p. 685). Torzano (1996) recognizes the components of empathy by referring to empathetic activities in the areas of communication, social competence, and literacy development.

To deepen conversations about empathy, educators must actively discuss its meaning and power in the classroom. Empathy is recognized as more than just being "nice" or "aware". I will discuss empathy in the classroom as the ability to *engage* with *different perspectives* in *conversation*. The following sections will disseminate the details of *engage* and *different perspective* and an empathetic *conversation* in the classroom. Being explicit about my definition of empathy informs how I have deconstructed various literacy practices and the empathy flow within these practices.

Empathy Flow in the Classroom

Engaging students in conversation with different perspectives is empathy. Educators attempt empathy development using various instructional strategies in order to maintain effective communication (Johnston, 2012; Torzano, 1996). Empathy involves attempting to *engage* in a new perspective to expand understanding. This engagement is the essence of how learners assimilate new knowledge. Learners use the building blocks of experience with the foundation of what is already known to create a new idea. Empathy is essential to scaffolding and essential to growth (Johnston, 2012). Learners *need* empathy in the classroom to navigate the tension and sometimes frustration of learning (Johnston,2012).

Empathy is evident in the conversations and multidimensional interactions of the classroom. This includes teacher-to-student, student-to-student, student-to-teacher, as well as student-to-self and teacher-to-self interactions.

Empathy is engaging students in **conversations** with different perspectives. Empathy is a part of every classroom in varying degrees. When teachers provide a book at an independent level for a student or when they use an analogy that students can connect with (Zull, 2004), they are employing teacher-to-student empathy because they have paid attention to the students Theory of Mind. Conversely, when students use avenues to explain their own confusions to the teacher (Larson, 2009; Wang, Kedem & Hertzog, 2004) , they are employing student to teacher empathy. The student recognizes that the teacher can provide better instruction if teachers know why the student is struggling. Difficult students often do not key us into these parts of their mind either by choice or because they do not know how or if they should communicate (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003; Johnson, 2012; Torzano, 1996). Authors also employ empathy when they consider their audience as they construct their writing. Students and teachers show empathy toward the author through their response and questioning (conversation) with the text. For the purposes of this paper, I focus on the student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and student-to-self relationships embedded in the literature around empathy in the classroom. .

Awareness of our own and others' Theory of Mind and its importance in the development of empathy will be discussed next, followed by a de-construction of

classroom literacy events and the empathy flow in those classrooms. Finally, I

conclude with a call for awareness in potential gaps in literature and research

necessary for empathy development in education.

Exploring Theory of Mind

Empathetic conversations occur when engaging in **different perspectives.**

Often empathy is thought of as an interaction with others (Carr, 2010, Johnston et

al., 2011, Upright, 2002), however, there empathy also occurs in understanding and

awareness of how clearly one is able to reflect on their own Theory of Mind. "We do

not have to be conscious of a theory to have one, but we have to be conscious of a

theory to use it to outgrow ourselves" (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008, p. 23).

What do teachers believe about their ability to instruct? Do educators have growth

mindsets or fixed mindsets? (Dweck, 2006) Learning is a tense and wonderful

process and all learners need to navigate their own assimilation of knowledge

carefully.

Being aware of how educators believe students should engage with their

learning helps guide effective teaching. Are students engaged? If not, why? One

teacher reflects on his own theory of mind in *The Art of Changing the Brain.*

> At times in the past, I was seriously disappointed in my ability to
> help students learn by explaining things to them. Often I noticed
> their eyes glaze over shortly after I began my explanations. Still, I
> believed that they did need explanations and that my job was to
> find better ways of explaining. But my examination of brain
> research has made me think seriously about giving up on explaining
> as a teaching tool. When I began to understand knowledge as
> consisting networks of neurons, it dawned on me -powerfully—
> that my students' knowledge was actually physically different from
> my own. Particularly in my specialty, biochemistry, our networks

> differed. But my networks were all that I had! When I explained
> biochemistry, I had to use my own networks; and for my students to
> understand it, they had to use theirs.   Maybe the two sets of
> networks were just too different. So I reduced my explanations and
> instead turned to demonstrations, metaphors, and stories. As much
> as possible I tried to show rather than explain things. (Zull, 2004, p.
> 70)

Educators are put in the position to model empathy in their instruction. This

transaction is a model for student development of their learning process.

Recognizing what is needed in order to understand a particular idea and paying

attention to what tools students are using in their own Theory of Mind is productive

formative assessment and empathetic practice.

Empathetic instruction is a transformative process, approaching our own

learning with the "genuine feeling that no one has arrived" (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001,

p.154). Constructing an environment of growth allows students to take risks and

make mistakes. Instruction is embedded with a Theory of Mind – whether educators

are conscious of it or not. The following paragraph discusses a reflective practice

that uncovers the Theory of Mind alive in teaching practices. By uncovering the

relationships between Theory of Mind and teaching practices, educators are better

able to guide students' metacognition and awareness.

In *The Art of Changing the Brain*, Zull (2004) explains what happens in the

brain when humans receive information (see Figure 1). Following this process of

new information allows a look at one's Theory of Mind is brought to light. The

following four reflective questions, as discussed in *Reflective Practice to Improve*

Schools (York-Barr, Sommers, & Ghere, 2006, p. 84), align with the journey of new

information.

1) What? *Information/Experieince* (see Fig. 1) What are we observing? What information are we seeing?

2) Why? *Meaning/Reflection* (see Figure 1) Exploring the areas behind the obvious and the reasons they exist.

3) So what? *Ideas/Abstraction* (see Figure 1) What does it mean? What new ideas/understandings do we have?

4) Now what? *Action/Testing* (see Figure 1) How will we act on those ideas? Imagine.

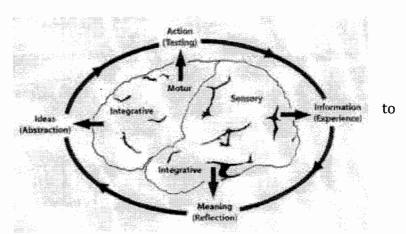I will use this framework to deconstruct and present you different literary environments. This structure allows the reader to address the

Figure 1 Four Major Regions of the Cerebral Cortex (Zull, 2004)

new information or experience by considering what is happening in literacy practices (WHAT), why it is important (WHY). Then, consider the importance of what happened with what is already known to develop ideas by adding meaning (SO WHAT) and, finally, what is transferred for future use and how to test the new information (NOW WHAT). I will discuss this framework further in the following sections. First, I will discuss the literacy lens through which I see how educators can employ understanding of Theory of Mind through a Reader Response approach to literacy.

Reader Response and Empathy in Literacy Practice

Empathy is present in the very act of practicing literacy authentically

(Cunningham, 2007; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Sumara et al, 2008; White, 2003).

Instructing students by validating their experience with literacy is an integral aspect

of the theory known as Reader Response Theory (Rosenblatt, 1994). Believing that

"reading provides a foundation for the relational properties of communities and

relational capacities of community members" (Ivey & Johnston, 2013, p. 5) allows

educators to disavow the idea "that the teacher is the one with textual authority and,

as a result, students continue to be enveloped in situations where they are obligated

to try to read and understand the text just one way – as the teacher wants them to"

(Aukerman, 2012, p.43). Reader response theory is built upon the idea that

students share their own interactions with text and that each response varies.

Through the practice of recognizing one's response, educators can better meet the

student where they are in their awareness of the world around them. This way the

students engage in the responsibility to share their unique understanding of the

texts (Rosenblatt, 1994). Indeed, no one can share the response *but* the individual.

For instance, my student's poetry readings exhibited their connection to the poem

and what they inferred by their inflection and presentation choices. Similarly, the

cause and effects of the potentials of the current farm bill proposition discussed in a

group reading of a news article sparked a debate that displayed the student's ability

to support opinions using textual evidence. Journaling, letter writing, question

asking, and readers theatre were various ways students shared their response to

texts informally. These were practices that allowed me to see their Theory of Mind about a text or literacy situation. Their sharing led to deeper class discussion and investigations. For example a question was raised about a main character after one book reading, "Why is he reacting so harshly to everyone around him?" We explored the five stages of grief as the main characters friend dies suddenly. Reader response invites teachers to release control of comprehension building to the students and their individual needs and allowed me to better frontload my understanding of their Theory of Mind and, therefore, create an empathetic teaching practice. With a clearer picture of my student, I was better able to guide their literacy growth.

Student conversation with the text is recognized with reader response theory. Students can begin to claim their response and stretch their understandings. The historic belief in the prevalence of the text holding the information or believing that students bring little to the text are examples of believing students are empty vessels. These perspective are not productive in any learning environment. Reading is an active conversation between the author and the student (Rosenblatt, 1994). Reader Response supports each literacy practice discussed below.

Empathy Flow in Classroom Literacy Practices

Considering Theory of Mind and the classroom literacy practice, this review of literacy practices is laid out on the following two tables for reference (see Table 1 and Table 2). The tables below show the author, grade level, and environmental focus in the "WHO?" section. Then the tables are then divided into four major

questions that follow how our brains receive information (as stated above). These

are the questions I used to de-construct the literacy events I uncovered in each

article.

- WHAT? What happened in the lesson? What were the students doing? What was the teacher doing?
  - o This section gives a summary of what is happening in the literacy event.

- WHY? Why was this activity chosen? What was the theory behind it?
  - o Empathy flow:
    - T = teacher
    - S = student
    - Self = Development of one's own Theory of Mind
    - → = flow direction
  - o This section serves two purposes. The theory of the practice is considered as well the types of empathy flow that occur in the event coded with capital letters as seen above above.

- SO WHAT? So what is the strength/importance of this activity?
  - o This section reveals the why this activity is important to the development of empathy.

- NOW WHAT? Now what do the students take away? What was the base of the practice that was explicitly about empathy building?

Table 1

De-Constructing Literacy Practices K-3

	Class Discussions (K) Vasquez, 2004),	PowerPoint Reflections (K/1) (Wang, Kedem, & Hertzog, 2004)	Story Exploration (3rd) (Upright, 2002)	Social Writing (3rd) (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003)	RORI: Coding empathy (3rd) (Lysaker, Tonge, Gauson, & Miller, 2011)
Who?					
What?	Daily class discussions to foster questioning and dialogue.	Students use power point to reflect on their understand of measurement tools.	A step-by-step lesson that models questioning and discussion of student responses to a story, group work and expanding the story or changing it and reflecting on it.	Students explore their connection to the text and combine and write their responses to events with a recognition of cultural positions in the world around them.	A reading intervention program explicitly modeling relationships formed in texts.
Why?	Students explore their own questions and work with each other to consider how to answer questions together and with texts.	Students reflect with guiding questions on their own experience learning about measurement and share with others.	Teacher models and co-constructs questions and pays close attention to the classes' reactions modeling how to navigate disagreements among student responses.	Weaving reading and writing workshop with a lens of the 4 resources model brings greater awareness of perspectives in their classroom.	Language building and relationships are socially constructed and so the link between literacy and social skills is tight and modeling of social skills should be a part of literacy development.
Empathy Flow	T→S S→T S→S S→Self	T→S S→T S→Self	T→ S S → T S→ Self S → S	T→S S → S S →Self	T→S S→T S→Self
So what?	Student choice leads to development of dialogue	Student reflection leads assimilating old knowledge with new	Ability for multiple modes of response and engaging with the story. Empathy growth is tracked through story expansions	Using writing to de-construct their world with a critical len.	Explicit modeling and assessment of perspective/empathy components
Now what?	Students have considered other perspectives through discussion.	Students communicate their own learning.	Student awareness of perspectives in text characters and classmates.	Perspective taking through questioning and writing.	Students gain perspective building tools through characters.

Table 2

De-Constructing Literacy Practices 4-All

	Classroom Library Interaction (4th deaf) (Torzano, 1996)	Digital Literacy Experiences (5th) (Larson, 2009)	Book Talks (8th) (Ivey & Johnston, 2013)	Letter Writing (High School) (Nicolini, 2008)	QAR (all grade levels) (Rapheal & Au, 2005)
Who?					
What?	The teacher chooses books at students' levels to expand their experiences. Students write comments about the books on sticky note inside of the book.	Teacher provides students with a digital way of interacting with their reading via e-books.	Teacher book talks shared with the whole school and students choose what they want to read. Limited number of books available.	Students write letters annonymously to other students about controversial readings. Readings should be engaging.	Students taught to question texts and categorize their questions.
Why?	Teacher considers students' individual reading abilities and backgrounds to gather classroom materials. Allows and avenue for response to texts.	Students use tools to further explore and code texts with their responses.	Teachers model choice and dialogue about texts and students choose texts. Limited availability increases discussions.	The anonymity allows for a freer reflection and the interaction of responses requires closer readings.	Student questioning is essential to inquiry development and reading stamina. Builidng inquirers is part of building learners.
Empathy Flow	T→ S S→ S	T→ S S→T S→ Self	T→S S→ S S→S S→Self	T→S S→S S→ Self	T→ S S→T S→Self S→S
So what?	Classroom includes materials that are specific to the students needs and Students allowed to communicate text responses to each other.	Technology allows freedom of coding texts as questions arise, and connections are made.	This format allows students to develop personal literacy choice.	Letter writing allowed a conversational tone allowed for deeper reflection and conversation.	Questions allow deeper engagement with texts.
Now what?	Students recognize others' Theory of Mind and share their own..	Students have a visual of their responses to reflect on interaction of reader and text.	Students compare perspectives and develop their own.	Student perspective and Theory of Mind developing - shutting down polemics and opening conversation	Students explore their own questions to develop understanding of texts and become inquirers.

These tables are a summary of the following sections. Please refer to them for a quick synopsis of the literacy practices discussed below.

Class Discussions

Empathy practice occurs through conversation in classrooms. Dr. Vasquez, a former kindergarten teacher held class discussion time with her students (Vasquez, 2004, p.111). She built student to student, teacher to student dialogue. They decided to take a survey of who in their classroom had hotdogs and who had hamburgers at the school picnic. It was revealed that one student didn't have either option because his family is vegetarian. The process fostered student-to-self reflection (see Table 1). They were positioned to see another's point of view bringing awareness to their own (Luce-Kapler, Sumara, & Iftody, 2010). This lead to a full scale project lead by the students that involved reading about what vegetarians eat and writing to parent groups that organize the school picnic to bring to their awareness of the issue. It was through the student conversation with their classmates and with the texts about vegetarianism that they employed this empathy practice. They deeply engaged with another perspective. The relationship between all participants in the classroom created a productive and engaging learning environment.

Book Talks

In Amy Faulkner's 8th grade classroom students were taught how to discuss the books they read (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). The reading program consisted of a mix of teacher book talks (potential student to teacher empathy flow) and student

lead discussion. A student noted that through this process that includes student

choice and the teacher's role in helping students find the right book (a form of

teacher to student empathy flow) he was "more open-minded and more willing to

listen" (Ivey & Johnston, 2013, p. 30). "Engaged reading was seen to cause talk

about and through books, which was seen to cause changes in social relationships

and the reverse causal order was also reported" (Ivey & Johnston, 2013, p. 31).

Students developed empathy for other students as they shared similar interests in

similar books with both surface level subjects such as football and deeper subjects

such as gang violence (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). Ivey and Johnston describe that one

student's "attention to the mental and emotional states of the character, rather than

just the action in the text, signifie[d] an expiation of his social imagination. In doing

this, he [began] to imagine the characters' motives, decisions, and consequences in

reaction to himself and to those outside of the text" (Ivey & Johnston, 2013, p. 40).

Teachers are concerned with the relationships students are developing with their

world and dialogue in this case created an empathetic environment. Opening each

other's Theory of Mind through the use of texts allowed students to see from

multiple perspectives. With a focus on engagement, strategic behavior began to

emerge out of student motivation to figure out what the message of the texts was

instead of the other way around. A strong teacher to student empathy relationship

supports student-led strategic learning because of the drive to understand the

author's message (see Table 2). Beginning with teacher's book talks, this empathy

flow shows growth in student awareness of others both in their environment and in

their own mindfulness.

Reflection with PowerPoint

Students in a kindergarten and first grade classroom reflected on their

measurement unit through the use of a student created PowerPoint presentation

(Wang et al,. 2004). Although focused on a math concept, literacy was involved in

the creation of a message and presentation. General questions, such as, "What is

something you know now about measurement that you didn't know at the

beginning?" and "Based on what you've told me so far/what you think, why is

measurement important?" (Wang et al, 2004., p. 163) cultivated a reflection about

student's learning – developing their Theory of Mind. After fifteen-minute sessions

of individual questioning with a TA, students reflected and constructed PowerPoint

presentations to share that allowed them to communicate what they learned with

others and grow in their own awareness of their learning. Students were asked to

reflect on the title, experiences with measurement, and the importance of

measurement. A few differences emerged between first graders and kindergarten.

For one example, the kindergarteners summarized the importance of measurement

with one situation instead of bringing them all together. Recognizing the patterns in

student development is helpful in creating lesson plans that meet student needs and

learning capacities to help them grow in any content area. The teacher observations

that occurred through the presentations "exposed their (student) misconceptions

and allowed the teachers to remedy them while the knowledge base was still

forming" (Wang et al, 2004, p. 168). Teachers could employ empathy with the

students' current Theory of Mind because the students were allowed a venue through which their current understandings could be shared allowing differentiated instruction (see Table 1). Those students who struggled with writing found a voice in PowerPoint and used visuals to share their construction of a math concept.

Students shared these PowerPoint presentations with each other. Bringing their unique experiences to the measurement concept allowed them to form a broader awareness of others' Theory of Mind creating a platform for student-to-student empathy. Student reflection and broadened awareness are products of this carefully constructed and unique reflection lesson.

Letter Writing

Students in Ms. Nicolini's high school class journeyed on a letter writing assignment in order to reflect on their reading and develop their opinions (Nicolini, 2008). Students began a letter writing discourse analysis (LWDA) anonymously with two other students. They were instructed to reflect on the various controversial readings they were assigned. Subjects such as the death penalty and influences weighing on characters in the story were discussed. Students considered "Who is in this story? Whose voice is missing? Whose view point is expressed? What view of the world is the text presenting?" (Nicolini , 2008, p. 77). The effective of perspective building was a result of this practice and therefore student to student relationship as well as development of their own awareness of their Theory of Mind (see Table 2). Another student reported, "It is much better to listen at least twice as much as you talk. This allows me to get a better perspective of what and how my

correspondents were feeling toward the issue and myself" (Nicolini, 2008, p. 77).

Teacher-to-student empathy was present because the teacher created a platform for

informal conversation that allowed students to explore how they are responding to

the texts and why (Nicolini, 2008). One student reflected "With no one to attack me

for my beliefs, it was easy to dig deep into my emotions about the book and the

death penalty" (Nicolini, 2008, p. 79). Reader response theory is woven deeply into

this practice because the activity is dependent on the interaction between the

responses of the students to the text. Students were also required to examine texts

in a new way as they now had other perspectives through which to see the texts

(Nicolini, 2008). "It is significant that both Kim and Justin recognized their

difference in opinion and, having recognized it, moved beyond that to have an

intellectual discussion" (Nicolni, 2008, p. 79). The practice of inquiry and attempting

to create a safe environment to explore one's own reflections, similar to the

PowerPoint presentations, allowed students to explore deeper comprehension as

well as their own thoughts and recognize that "I just sometimes don't understand

why people don't think like I do, which is probably a weak trait on my behalf"

effectively bringing to light the crux of the empathy deficit (Nicolini, 2008, p. 78).

Digital Literacy Experiences

Professor Larson documents the observations she made of 5th graders

interacting with e-books for the first time. *Digital Literacies* (Larson, 2009) includes

reflections on student experiences with using digital interfaces to interact with texts

that are useful to the discussion on the empathy flow in the classroom. The class

was introduced to the e-books and the different tools available to make notes, ask

questions, high light unusual parts quickly. Larson notes that the students were

excited to try something new but were a little skeptical about reading a book from a

screen. The reciprocal relationship of teacher to student and subsequently student

to self is seen in this scenario (see Table 2). When students learned no formal

comprehension quizzes were assigned "they began using the highlighter in unique

ways that reflected their personalities and individual reading styles" (Larson, 2009,

p. 256). The tools allowed students freedom to engage in reading response because

they "did not concern themselves with proper writing conventions and mechanics

but rather focused on transferring their thoughts" (Larson, 2009, p. 256). "The note

tool provided students with a literature-response mechanism that suited their

individual needs and purposes as readers" (Larson, 2009, p. 256). Personal

response to reading helps students develop their understanding of the world

around them. Teachers are also better able to gather formative assessment if they

are able to get a clear assessment of what the student is thinking. This type of

technology allowed this avenue. Obviously, all of the tools used on the screen could

transfer outside of digital technology; however, engaging readers in this way with a

focus on reader response may be as effective, if not more, as it models how to

productively use digital tools to reflect and to grow.

Story Exploration

This third grade class journeyed through stories together with their teacher,

Mr. Upright, and worked toward moral development (Upright, 2002). The teacher

displayed empathy for the students by assessing the class's current morale level and

then choosing texts with characters that have to make a tough choice in a specific

situation tailored to his students' needs as a group. This text could be teacher or

student written as well, augmenting the demystification of author and the power of

the story. Mr. Upright also helped students build context of the story and filled in

any essential unknowns. "Teachers can ask their students to imagine that they are

part of the situation and brainstorm possible problems that they would face"

(Upright, 2002, p. 17). Upright suggests that the story should be presented in an

enjoyable way. This could be a video, read aloud, puppets, etc. The teacher then

models forming questions about the story and navigating different perspectives that

the students bring to the story through class discussion. Sometimes responses will

differ and create conflict. Instead of ignoring this conflict, Upright considers this

disagreement "essential" to the development of empathy. "With proper modeling

and practice, students should learn to be persuasive without being argumentative,

and understanding why still being decisive" (Upright, 2002, p. 19). Moving into

group discussions, what students learned through whole group is employed in

smaller groups. They may role play and continue to explore other perspectives but

they always follow guidelines that allow all students to have a voice practicing

student to student empathy flow (see Table 1). Finally, the students create a story

extension or new circumstance in the story to deepen comprehension and

exploration of response. Closing with a student reflection of which the teacher keeps

track of, Mr. Upright successfully considers empathy important enough to his

student's literacy and ultimately moral development that he keeps track of the progress like any other test. Believing empathy is a learned process, he provides his students with explicit instruction on ways to employ empathy skills through the discussion of stories.

Social Writing

Ms. Lee's 3rd grade classroom experienced deep empathetic flow and growth through writer's workshop and generation of social narratives (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003). Using an adapted version of Luke and Freebody's Four Resources Model (2000) applied to writing:

> Students continued to be *code breakers* by figuring out the conventions of text and *text participants* by using their cultural experiences to create meaning. Additionally they became *text analysts* by representing and critiquing particular interest in their writing and *text users* by writing fiction with justice themes in order to bring about change. By engaging in all four practices, we saw a new genre merging in children's work – social narrative. Social narrative does not reject the personal, but rather builds on it. (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003, p. 436)

These third graders were positioned to de-construct the world around them through their writing practice. They began by focusing on author's "craft and characterization" as well as they way "published authors constructed narratives to influence readers and call attention to issues and interests" (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003, p. 437). Students kept a record of *Connections to My Life* in their writer's notebook. Here reader response is also integrated and then taken a step further to ask questions about student positions as related to others by asking questions from the four resources model such as "What will readers do with this text? What

background knowledge and cultural resources will I bring to bear in the creation of

this text? What voices did I represent and whose were silenced in my text?"

(Heffernan & Lewison, 2003, p. 436) Immediately it becomes apparent the depth of

awareness students are expected to employ. Students' own Theory of Mind

development becomes essential as they begin to consider the perspectives of others.

Ms. Lee exhibited empathy with student development as she conferenced with each

student about the creation of their stories and developed mini-lessons on various

writers moves to aid students in their message creating (Heffernan & Lewison,

2003). Drawing on themes discovered in the text, students were able to combine

what they knew with what they understood the text was telling them, to create

social narratives and student-to-student empathy (see Table 1). "Six kids wrote

about moving to new places and the lack of control kids feel when families move so

that parents can take higher paying jobs" (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003, p. 438).

"Girls and boys who were included during recess games wrote about kids who were

left out and lonely on the playground"(Heffernan & Lewison, p. 439). Students

expanded their own awareness to include the larger social context developing not

only empathy with each other, but empathy with the world around them.

> As they drew upon a wider range of cultural resources, these third graders
> tried on new identities and experimented with crossing cultural, racial and
> gender boundaries. Rather than asking, "What is it like to be me?" They
> seemed to ask, " What is it like to be *us*- kids at school?" (Heffernan &
> Lewison, 2003, p. 439)

I would like to note that Heffernan and Lewison brought to light the absence of

teachers' roles in bullying narratives. "In six, stories, teachers know about the peer

problems of characters, but remain mute" (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003, p. 440). The importance of teacher's empathy with students is uncovered.

Finally, similar to the Story Exploration of Mr. Upright's class a student from Ms. Lee's class relates an argument in the classroom to a story by saying, "Hey, if we keep doing this, we're going to be like the bad characters in our picture books!" (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003, p. 441). Social writing utilizes a lot of empathetic power to guide students (and teachers) from being "the bad guys" by recognizing the relational interactions around them and in texts through positioning themselves as writers.

Classroom Library Interaction

How materials in the classroom are handled can speak to the empathy flow in the classroom. In Ms. Torzano's 4th grade class of deaf students there is a library with books selected by the teacher to "meet the demands of students' varying reading levels" (Torzano, 1996, p. 9). This included different genres and books to specifically expand their worldview. Teacher to student empathy is obvious in this simple but important act. Torzano explains that if you opened one of these books, you may find a sticky note or many sticky notes with students' thoughts about this book. Ms. Torzano used notes that shared evaluative notes to the class as an example of what it means to go beyond "I like" or "I don't like" when evaluating a book. Students are given a chance to discover each other's perspectives on a book creating student-to-student empathy (see Table 2). This small but important communication helps students recognize that each person interacts with texts in

different ways. Torzano's article offers many other empathy building ideas in her

paper *Empathy development: A critical classroom tool.*

RORI – Coding Empathy

Relationally Oriented Reading Instruction (RORI) is a reading intervention

program (Lysaker, Tonge, Gauson, & Miller, 2011). Third grade students were

chosen for this intervention because their teacher believed they had less developed

social skills and lower reading scores , with the understanding that the "quality of

relationships within literacy events are important to literacy learning" (Lysaker et

al., 2011, p. 534). Similar to a combination of Nicolini's Letter Writing and Upright's

Story Examination, Lysaker et al. (2011) created an intervention that utilized

explicit discussions of relationships and perspectives in stories as well as letter

writing to develop students social skills and reading comprehension. Relationally

Oriented Reading Instruction which "assumes that language events like reading and

conversations in which they are embedded become the raw materials for the

construction of self including . . construction of the 'other'" (Ivey & Johnston, 2013,

p. 5. The assessment included a coding of student letters as follows:

> PER: Personal emotional response
> PERR: Personal emotional response with reason/explanation
> R: Recognition of character's emotions
> RR: Recognition of character's emotions with reasons
> P: Perspective taking
> PI: Personal Identification: relating one's emotions to the
> characters
> SI: Social Imagination: Imagining the beliefs and intentions of
> another
> C: Care: Imagining the reality of another, more globally—what
> their life is like—often expressing the wish to take action
> (Lysaker et al., 2011, p. 550)

This coding provides an avenue for assessing student's empathy growth. Empathy

is present in each of the above codes. For example the codes Recognition with

Reasons and Social Imagination requires the student to consider and engage with

another perspective (see Table 1). Considering what educators look for or assess in

student work will inform what they teach. This program provides a set of codes that

can support assessment of how empathy is modeled literacy practices.

Questioning

The Question Answer Response (QAR) is a framework for creating a

common language to discuss types of questions (Ralphael & Au, 2005). Questioning

is essential for developing one's own Theory of Mind and creating an understanding

of different perspectives as well as being essential for engagement in texts and has

been considered by many researchers (Frey, Fisher, & Nelson, 2013; Raphael & Au,

2005; Walsh & Sattes; 2005). Inner dialogue (questioning) with the author as one

reads helps build stamina when reading is difficult and therefore is a very important

literacy practice.

With QAR, any question can be categorized by how they are answered.

Instruction can begin with "analyzing the differences between In the Book and In my

Head" questions and answer relationships (Raphael & Au, 2005, p. 210). Then the

questions can be divided in to subcategories. The subcategories for In the Book

include 1) Think and Search and 2) Right There. Right There includes questions that

can be pointed to in the book. Think and Search encompasses those answers found

by putting together clues in the book. The subcategories for In my Head include 1)

Author and Me and 2) On my Own. Author and Me include the connections one can

make to the texts. On my Own are questions that the text brings up that only you

can answer. Students are developing and refining question asking skills by not only

answering questions but are engaging in developing and categorizing their own

questions. Teachers can further develop empathy for students as they will be able

to see what the student's current Theory of Mind about a piece of literature may be

through this approach. Also important in the development of inquiry is the

discussion of how different questions are categorized by different people. This

transfer to student-to-self empathy (see Table 2) and, potentially student-to-student

empathy, is encapsulated in the example below about how to categorize questions:

> Toward spring of fourth grade, Highfield eavesdropped as two
> students debated whether a question represented a Right
> There or an On My Own QAR. After the debate had gone on for
> a few minutes, one student explained that *for her*, it was an On
> My Own because she already knew the information to answer
> the question, but for her peer, it was a Right There, because she
> didn't already have the information and had to get it from the
> book. (Raphael & Au, 2005, p. 217).

This quote demonstrates students' development of awareness of others

perspectives in the classroom as well as one's own Theory of Mind. This is one type

of language for questioning that could be used in a classroom. It is most important

to note that development of inquiry is essential to the development of awareness of

the position and perspective – and is also essential empathy building (Johnston,

2012).

Analysis

The above de-construction of various classroom literacy environments presented in the literature related to empathy practices reveals that teacher positioning and language, use of informal modes of conversation, questioning, and writing are essential to developing the flow of empathy in the classroom. In each story, teachers showed explicit empathy for their students by providing some way of analyzing student Theory of Mind so that they could provide authentic and engaging reading and activities. This included informal opportunities to engage in discussions about texts with letter writing, class discussions, digital tools, sticky notes, and book talks (Larson, 2009; Nicolini, 2008; Torzano, 1996; Vasquez, 2004). Teacher modeling of effective discussion about texts and navigation through tension was essential when discussing difficult topics. This modeling provided a way for students to navigate their own daily tensions and practice developing empathy skills with themselves and those around them (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003; Upright, 2002; Vasquez, 2004). The practice of questioning was also a common thread in many of the literacy environments (Nicolini, 2008; Upright, 2002; Wang et al, 2004). Upright's story discussions, Faulkner's book talks, allowed for reflection that require productive questions that dig deeper into responses to texts again modeling for students a blueprint for navigating complicated situations with curiosity instead of fear. Finally, writing allows students to de-construct the world around them and consider how to convey that understanding as was shown in the literacy practices of letter writing about tough topics and the letter writing in Lysanker's RORI. Writing

is an empathetic practice, as writers need to know their position, their audience's position, and they need to know how to navigate that relationship effectively (Nicolini, 2008; Vasquez, 2004). Each of these components requires an awareness of reader response and the fact that whatever the student brings to the text will affect their experience with it. Educators have a chance to apply literacy practices that exemplify elements of empathy, perspective taking and awareness of one's own Theory of Mind. Literacy practices and the development of student voice is an empathetic journey that is essential to students' social development and cognitive development. This recognition is essential to aiding the empathy deficit and creating citizens who are critical thinkers and inquirers. Learning to recognize relationships is essential to life long learning. The empathy flow through literacy practices models productive ways for students to reach past polarization and instead, interact with each other and their world.

Next Steps

Words are delicate in that we know that they can hold different meaning for different people; however, it is crucial to the development of empathy in the classroom to continue having discussions about what empathy looks like in our classrooms. I am calling for collaboration among teachers, especially elementary teachers as they are working with students whose voices are typically underrepresented in studies of reflection, to support and collaborate with each other to discuss honestly the empathy flow they see in their own classroom and literacy practices. I am calling administrators to carefully consider professional

development. Are teachers given guidance to recognize their own Theory of Mind or to consider the empathy flow in their classroom? How can communities and support staff help teachers guide all the potential in their classrooms?

Research is needed to continue to explore modes of reflection and development of Theory of Mind for *all* those in the learning community. This includes those as young as pre-school all the way up to the teacher and administrators. Questions that need to be addressed include: What ways can we assess empathy? How might technology be used to enhance reflection? Digital technology may be here to stay. How can we use its conversational power productively toward empathy growth?

As in my beginning reflection, my students' voices were not heard or developed until I shifted the focus from being an information dispenser to an empathetic and productive navigator of the literacy world. Reflexively, my students began employing the same empathy with themselves and their classmates by asking tough questions and considering other viewpoints. As cultures and ideas become more and more intertwined, empathy development becomes more and more fundamental to everyday conversations and growth of all learners towards less dichotomization and greater understanding of the many voices of our human story.

Project Overview

The project overviews a semester of professional development that will guide teachers to recognize empathy development in their current literacy practices. Key questions teachers will address are: What could be added? What could be modeled or made more explicit in the interest of the students' empathy development? By working through a reflective framework, teachers work to refine their reflective practice, enhance their literacy instruction and recognize empathy development aligned with the Common Core.

Professional Development

Purpose

This first semester professional development introduces empathy as it relates to current classroom literacy practices. Teachers will explore empathy flow in their classrooms, share their Theory of Mind, analyze how to use text to model empathy, and synthesize their understanding of empathy with the Common Core Literacy Standards. Each teacher will reflect using the *What? Why? So what? Now what?* in order to deepen their learning. The professional development is built around practicing productive reflection that moves towards empathetic instruction. By instructing with a focus on empathy the teacher is modeling explicitly a reflective practice for students. The teachers' practice in reflection serves to augment the empathy flow in the classroom and stronger communication practice in students. Classrooms can become places for students to develop as reflective citizens if the teachers provide empathetic instruction.

Outline

Date	Title	Objectives
August (.5 day)	Empathy Flow and Literacy	*Reflect on last years empathy flow *Analyze text for elements of empathy
September (1 day)	Exploring Theory of Mind	*Review/Revamp lesson to include Reader Response *Brainstorm literacy practices on handout
October (.5 day)	Common Core and Empathy Practice	*Analyze the Common Core Literacy Standards used *Brainstorm literacy practices on handout
November (.5 day)	Common Core and Empathy Practice Work Time	*Discuss implementation of literacy practices
December (.5 day)	Next Steps	*Review the semester. *Reflect on current empathy flow compared to end of last year

Month-by-Month Instructions

Empathy flow and literacy.

In August, teachers will bring whole group books they have used in the past in their classrooms. Developing teacher awareness begins with the introduction to a discussion on what empathy looks like in the classroom. A short video will introduce the importance of empathy and discussion will follow about the definition of empathy. Teachers will be asked to share what they believe the video is saying. After reviewing slides 1-7 (see Appendix A) teachers will create a model of how they

believed empathy was flowing in their classroom last year. If they are new teachers, they may consider a classroom they have been in. Teachers will also be given a hand out (see Appendix B). In groups teachers will discuss the texts they use in the classroom currently and the aspects of empathy they see modeled in those texts. At the end of this discussion teachers will reflect on What they learned? Why they believed they learned it? So what is the purpose of learning it? And Now what will they take to their classroom instruction? Professional development leaders will review these reflections and collect/copy/return the teacher created empathy flow reflections. These documents will inform the review needed in the next meeting.

Exploring theory of mind.

In September, teachers will bring lesson plans they have used in the last week and are planning on using in the next week as well as empathy handouts from August PD to a whole day session. Professional development leaders will address the last meeting time by reviewing the slides and bringing up any confusing elements. After discussing, again, the definition of empathy teachers will review slides 8-10 (see Appendix A). Teachers will be asked to share their thoughts and questions on the video. Bring to the teacher attention that they were engaging in a response to the video and that this understanding in their pedagogy is essential to empathy development in the classroom. They will then review slides 11 and 12 (see appendix A) about Reader Response asking questions as needed. Teachers will be in small groups where they will highlight the parts of the lesson plan where Reader Response is evident. Whole group sharing commences and teacher brainstorm

more literacy practices/questions that fit in the chart (see Appendix B) Finally slides 13 and 14 (see Appendix A) are shown and discussed. Examples of the last thing they learned are shared. Teachers will then return to their lesson plans and consider how Reader Response can be augmented and how elements of the reflection framework can be placed in their classrooms. Then teachers engage in the reflection framework for the entire day. Professional development team will collect/copy/return past lesson plans to analyze understanding of Reader Response as well as the reflections to fill in gaps of understanding in the next PD and through individual conferencing as needed.

Common core and empathy practice.

In October, teachers will bring lesson plans for the next week and empathy handouts/notes. Whole group will review the slides up to 15 (see Appendix A). They will then create a map of the empathy flow as they currently see it in their classroom. Teachers will then engage in watching a music video. PD leaders will pause the video after a minute and ask teachers to discuss what they saw and choose a character to follow and consider their Theory of Mind through out the entire video. In 30 second increments, pause the video and discuss the changes in the characters Theory of Mind. At the end of the video have individual teachers brainstorm a theme or take-away and share it with an elbow partner. Then discuss slide 16 (see Appendix A) and the residue of the story and the individual themes in the room. This practice serves to solidify understanding in educators of Theory of Mind, Reader Response, and the development of perspective taking using literacy.

Questions should be encouraged at all points but especially here. Slides 17-27 (see Appendix A) are introduced to introduce the connection between the Common Core Literacy Standards and aspects of empathy and what occurred while watching the music video. Small group and then whole group will brainstorm more literacy practices to add to the empathy handout (see Appendix B). Teachers will share lesson plans and highlight literacy practices that allow empathy and connect them to the Common Core standards discussed. Teachers will then reflect using the framework. PD leaders will collect/copy/return reflections, empathy flow reflections, and lesson plans. In the next week, PD leaders should observe/tape lesson plans in action and conference with teachers about empathy flow. These documents/observations will be reviewed for any troubleshooting/celebrations necessary.

Common core and empathy practice work time.

In November, teachers should bring empathy handouts, and lesson plans in the near past and present. This PD time will be devoted to reviewing the slides and working on creating lesson plans that include aspects of empathy. Teachers will share moments in literacy practices where they did or did not observe empathy in small groups and in whole group. Video moments may be shared. Teachers briefly will discuss students understanding of "the why" in their classrooms and spend most of PD working in small groups on reviewing lesson plans and considering strengths and next steps for their classrooms empathy development. Reflections

should include what they noticed in this work time. Reflections are

collected/copied/returned.

Next Steps

In December, teachers will bring hand outs and past empathy flow

reflections. Teachers will review all the slides (see Appendix A) and draw out a final

empathy flow reflection. Teachers will share. Then a discussion of what is needed

next semester will include a consideration of where the school is at and where they

would like to go in empathy development in literacy practices. A comprehensive list

from the hand out (see Appendix B) of literacy practices will be reviewed in small

groups and gaps will be discussed. Teachers will do a final reflection on what they

believe their individual next steps are and what they need. Teachers will also fill out

the feedback form (see Appendix C). This form allows PD leaders to productively

reach teachers needs. Finally, PD leaders will collect/copy/return these documents.

After reviewing the documents PD leaders will consider next steps in developing

empathy development in literacy practices in their schools classrooms.

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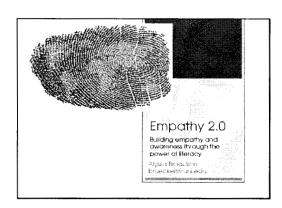Larson, L. C. (2009). e-Reading and e-Responding: New Tools for the Next

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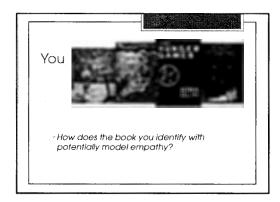Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (2000). Further notes on the four resources model in V.

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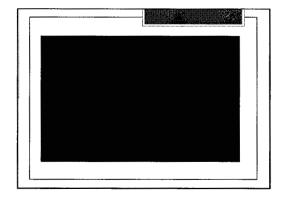Literacy through Writing Communities. *English Journal,* 76-80.

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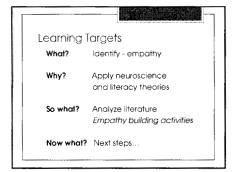Research in Childhood Education, 19*(2), 159-174.

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York-Barr, J., Sommers, W. A., & Ghere, G. S. (Eds.). (2006). *Reflective practice to improve schools: An action guide for educators.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Zull, J. E. (2004). The art of changing the brain. *Educational Leadership, 62*(1), 68-72.

Appendix A

6/14/13&

Empathy 2.0
Building empathy and
awareness through the
power of literacy
Alyssa Brauckan
brauckan@runi.edu

_____
_____
_____
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You

_How does the book you identify with
potentially model empathy?_

_____
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Learning Targets

What?	Identify - empathy
Why?	Apply neuroscience and literacy theories
So what?	Analyze literature Empathy building activities
Now what?	Next steps...

What? Empathy

http://adebrainserav.blogspot.com/2010/10/empathy-cognitive-and-affective.html

What? *Name it so we can claim it*

· Definition of Empathy:
  Perceiving or becoming aware of a different perspective

· Empathy as a process:
  Activities that deepen empathy
  Ex. # Inquiry

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Mapping empathy in your classroom

Sketch these components of a classroom with arrows in the direction of empathy.

Why?

When do student's begin to empathize - see from another perspective? How can we foster it?

Why?

Theory of Mind

Why?

Theory of Mind = Recognizing Perspectives

What did you hear?

Why? Literacy Theories

Reader Response
Inherently individual experience

Concerned with the particular and personal
way in which student infuse meaning into
the pattern of printed symbols
- Rosenblatt, 1994

Reader Response Theory

How do teachers use empathy
to help students navigate their
own text?

So what? Empathy tool

4) Motor Cortex:
Acting on
those ideas
Now what?

1) Sensory cortex getting information **What?**

3) Integrative cortex in front; creating new ideas from these meanings **So what?**

2) Integrative cortex by sensory: making meaning of the information **Why?**

Zull J. E. (2004). The art of changing the brain. Educational Leadership, 62(1), 68-72.

Sc

Aspects of Empathy

Accurately Identify

Engages in Inquiry

Make Connections

Supports alternative views with evidence

Considers multiple viewpoints, including your own

Relates to people who see the world differently

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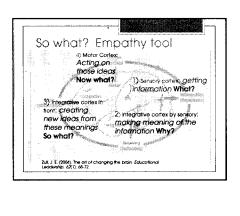
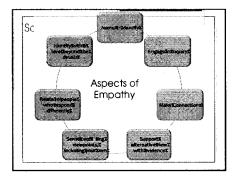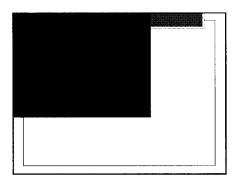## So what?

What is the residue?

Empathy and the Common Core

Key Ideas and Details

1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2 *Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development;* summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3 *Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.*

Empathy and the Common Core

Craft and Structure

4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and *analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone*.

5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

6 *Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text*.

Empathy and the Common Core

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

.7 Integrate and _evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats,_ including visually and quantitatively, as well as in war ds.[1]

.8 Delineate and _evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence._

.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to _compare the approaches the authors take._
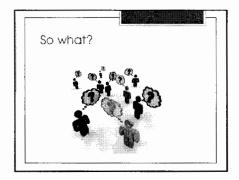

Where the Sidewalk Ends
from the book "Where the Sidewalk Ends" (1974)

There is a place where the sidewalk ends
and before the street begins,
and there the grass grows soft and white,
and there the sun burns crimson bright,
and there the moon-bird rests from his flight
to cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black
and the dark street winds and bends.
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow
we shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow
and watch where the chalk-white arrows go
to the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
and we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,
for the children, they mark, and the children, they know,
the place where the sidewalk ends.

So what? How will we guide our student's awareness?

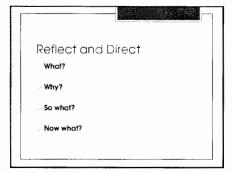| what Getting information	What is the text? What happens in the text? What are the cause and effect relationships?	#Name it #Engage in inquiry #Make connections	
why Making meaning of information	Problems/tension relationships: What are the contributing factors? What were the characters thinking/feeling? How many perspectives were shown?	#Name it Delineate and evaluate Engage Analyze including their oun #Engage in inquiry	

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So what? *Importance of the "why"*

Developing the "why"
- Promotes awareness of self and others viewpoints or "theories of mind"

What activities do you use to support student's development of "the why"?

So what? How will we guide our student's awareness?

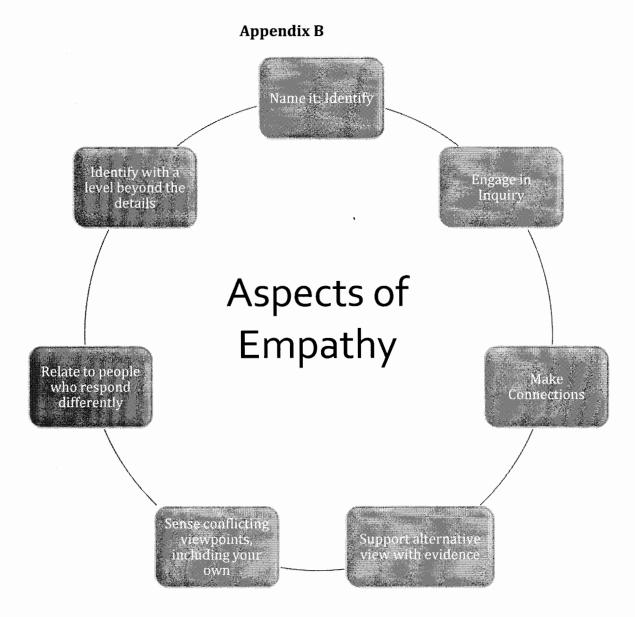| sawhat Creating new ideas from meaning | Underlying themes? Questions for the text? Perspectives that are new to the learner's norms? Why did the events seem significant? What themes are in the contributing factors? | #identify with a level beyond the details #Engage in inquiry | |
| know/what Acting on those ideas: imagine | Allow Reader Response: In this situation, what are your learner's responses? Do they support the underlying theme a character's position? Why or why not? | #Relate with people who respond differently #Engage in inquiry #Make connections | |

So what?

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Appendix B

Aspects of Empathy

Name it: Identify

Engage in Inquiry

Make Connections

Support alternative view with evidence

Sense conflicting viewpoints, including your own

Relate to people who respond differently

Identify with a level beyond the details

Presenter Info:
Alyssa Bruecken - abruecken@gmail.com

Citations:

- O Cunningham, D. (2007). An empirical framework for understanding how teachers conceptualize and cultivate historical empathy in students. *J. Curriculum Studies.* 41(5). 679-709.
- O York-Barr, J., Sommers, W.A., Ghere, G.S., & J. Montie. (2006). *Reflective practice to improve schools; an action guide for educators.* California; Corwin Press.

	Guiding questions	Empathy Connection	Literacy Practices Link
what Getting information	What is the text? What happens in the text? What are the cause and effect relationships?	**#Name it** **#Engage in inquiry** **#Make connections**	
why Making meaning of information	Problems/tension/relationships: What are the contributing factors? What were the characters thinking/feeling? How many perspectives were shown?	**#Support alternative viewpoints with evidence** **#Sensing conflicting viewpoints, including their own.** **#Engage in inquiry**	
so what Creating new ideas from meaning	Underlying themes? Questions for the text? Perspectives that are new to the learner's norms? Why did the events seem significant? What themes are in the contributing factors?	**#Identify with a level beyond the details** **#Engage in inquiry**	
now what Acting on those ideas: Imagine	Allow Reader Response: In this situation, what are your learner's responses? Do they support the underlying theme a character's position? Why or why not?	**#Relate with people who respond differently** **#Engage in inquiry** **#Make connections**	

Appendix C

Professional Development Feedback Form

Please comment on how helpful the PD's objective will be to your profession.

How would you apply the information to your classroom?

Was the presentation organized?

I still need. .

What follow-up would you like/suggest, either in your class, team, building or system-wide? (Circle)

Instructional Coaching

Follow-up release time

Support at team meetings

Classroom Observation

Comments: